

NEWS RELEASE

USDA Forest Service -- Northern Region



For Immediate Release

June 24, 2003

Contact: Olleke Rappe-Daniels
(406) 309-3028

Grand Opening of Lolo Pass Visitor Center/Rest Area

MISSOULA, MT—Visitors are invited to celebrate the completion of the Lolo Pass Visitor Center and Rest Area on Friday, June 27. The dedication starts at 11 a.m. MDT, and festivities are expected to last until 5 p.m. (10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Pacific Time).

The visitor center is along US Hwy 12 at the Montana/Idaho border, and parking will be at the Shotgun Creek chain up area and Lolo Hot Springs.

The hosts for the celebration include the USDA Forest Service, Idaho Transportation Department, and the Montana Department of Transportation.

The visitor center, a popular rest point for motorists on scenic US Hwy 12, resembles a rustic pine Forest Service ranger station from the 1930s. Exhibits of the Lolo Trail and cultural wonders of the area are displayed inside the new Center giving visitors a chance to learn about historical users of Lolo Pass; including the Nez Perce tribe, the Salish people, and Lewis and Clark.

A ¼-mile accessible trail nearby that circles a newly restored wetland area, picnic tables, and a group pavilion are available for visitors to enjoy.

The USDA Forest Service, Federal Highway Administration, Montana Department of Transportation, and Idaho Transportation Department conceived the idea for a Lolo Pass Visitor Center and Rest Area five years ago. Support from the states' Congressional delegations helped the agencies secure funding to make the Lolo Pass project possible.

"Together we have created something that none of us could have done alone," says Forest supervisor Larry Dawson. "Clearly the traveling public will benefit from this cooperation."

Historians from the Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and confederated tribes of the Colville Reservation worked with the Forest Service to develop displays for the visitor center.

"I'm excited to have agency and tribal interests involved in the process," says Regional Forester Brad Powell. "It's important to respect and share the local natural and cultural heritage with others."

Bodell construction of Missoula, Montana constructed the four million dollar project, L'Heureux Page Werner PC of Great Falls, Montana led the designing team, and Southern customer Exhibits of Alabama constructed the displays.

For information about the facility contact Diana Jones at 208-476-4541.

###